

ANALYZING A DOCUMENT

A. IDENTIFYING THE DOCUMENT

1. Author or source _____
2. Title _____

3. Date _____
4. Type of document _____
5. Proper bibliographic entry for the document _____

B. PUTTING THE DOCUMENT IN CONTEXT

1. Suggest two or three appropriate titles for this primary source: _____

2. Describe the purpose of the document or its intended audience. Why was it written?

3. Select some direct quotes or cite some specific data from the document which help explain its purpose. _____

4. Where would you look for additional documents of this type? _____

C. USING THE DOCUMENT

1. List the most important pieces of information conveyed by the document. _____

2. What questions does the document suggest? _____

D. EVALUATING THE DOCUMENT

1. Is the document reliable? List any suspected errors or misleading statements in the document. _____

2. Make a statement about the general utility of the document for your particular interest. _____

a couple of hints . . .

A document may provide answers to questions about a topic. However, it should also provoke new questions. Be alert for these new possibilities and be sure to write them down.

Try not to draw final conclusions based on the analysis of only one document. Remember, documents are only one type of authority used in the study of a topic. Always use as many different sources as possible.